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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

TAPESTRY AT THE PARIS EXPOSITION.

BY GEORGES GRISON, OF THE PARIS "FIGARO."

THE first thing the visitor rushes to see as he enters the central dome, is the high decorative panel on the right, the signboard, as it were, of the National Manufactory of the Gobelins. The Shah of Persia, on his first visit, spent a quarter of an hour in studying this superb piece, and would have it explained to him. It represents "The Fairies' Godchild," painted by the late M. Mazerolle as we learn from the wreath of everlasting flowers attached beneath it. The tapestry was executed by Messrs. Vernet, Emile Flamens, Lavaux, Munier, and Boiton.

Tapestry, after a period of activity during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when there were many manufactories busy in almost every part of civilized Europe, gradually declined; and at this day there is scarcely any important center of this industry, excepting the national factories at Paris and Beauvais, and the private workshops at Aubusson. Hence it is a purely French product; for the few looms which are worked outside of France are for the most part in the hands of men from Aubusson.

The national French tapestry manufactories have at all times sent out the finest specimens of the art; but within the last fifteen years Aubusson has made great strides. Influenced by the style of the finest old pieces of tapestry, attempts have been made so to modify the mode of work as to return to the best traditions of the art of tapestry weaving. Thus tapestry has once more become what it ought to be—a hanging decoratively treated.

Messrs. Hamot's exhibits show a distinct effort in this direction, both in the reproduction of ancient pieces and in others newly designed and executed. as the panel called "The Cascades." This panel, for which the lamented painter Mazerolle executed the cartoon, shows what capital results may be achieved when the artist takes due account of the conditions under which tapestry can interpret his work, and when the tapestry hand is skilled in the art. This panel, which shows a triumph over difficulty in the execution of the nude female figure personifying the cascade, when compared with those copied from old tapestry, such as "Cupid and Psyche bathing," after Giulio Romano, or "Antonina," after Lebrun, proves that we can do as good work now as was ever done, and that the workers of Aubusson may try their strength against the best examples of the Gobelins or of Flanders.

Such specimens, by reason of their costliness, can never of course become an object of ordinary commerce; but close by them we see other and simpler work, still very rich in tone and color. We have landscapes and green woods, but without figures, so that a good effect can be produced in a coarse stitch, and they are in many cases delightful both in design and color.

To complete this account of the tapestry textiles in the Exhibition those must be mentioned which are intended for covering furniture, some of which are executed entirely in silk. In these we frequently recognize, if not the designs, still the influence of Boucher, the great decorator of the eighteenth century. Messrs. Hamot also exhibit tapestry in what is called *Savonnerie*, that is to say velvet pile, each stitch inserted by hand with no limitation as to colors.

This is a very ancient mode of weaving, and all Oriental carpets

Some centuries since, the East supplied us with textiles of this class, of wonderful richness and delicacy of design. Messrs. Hamot have copied with very great success three specimens of this kind, formerly in the collection of M. Albert Goupil. One of these carpets, all in silk, contains on an average one million stitches in each square metre; the two others are in wool, with



THE CASCADE, BY MAZEROLLE.—Aubusson Tapestry Manufactured by Messrs. HAMOT.

sunk stitches filled with silver thread. Nothing so elaborate had ever before been wrought at Aubusson, and it may be added

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that it could no longer be produced anywhere in the East. In this style of work, as in tapestry, the same firm exhibits less costly products, some in the Louis Seize style, and some in imitation of the modern Oriental carpets made at Smyrna and in India. In such an industry as this the raw material is a trifling part of the expense, which is principally in skilled labor and in the price of the designs. As a matter of course the best materials are employed, and the dyes are of a quality to promise the utmost durability. Messrs. Hamot dye their own silks and wool, employing to this day the ancient dye stuffs which are never used in mechanical reproductions by reason of their high price. The Paris house for the sale of Aubusson carpets and hangings has existed for more than a century; the manufactory was entirely reorganized five-and-twenty years ago.

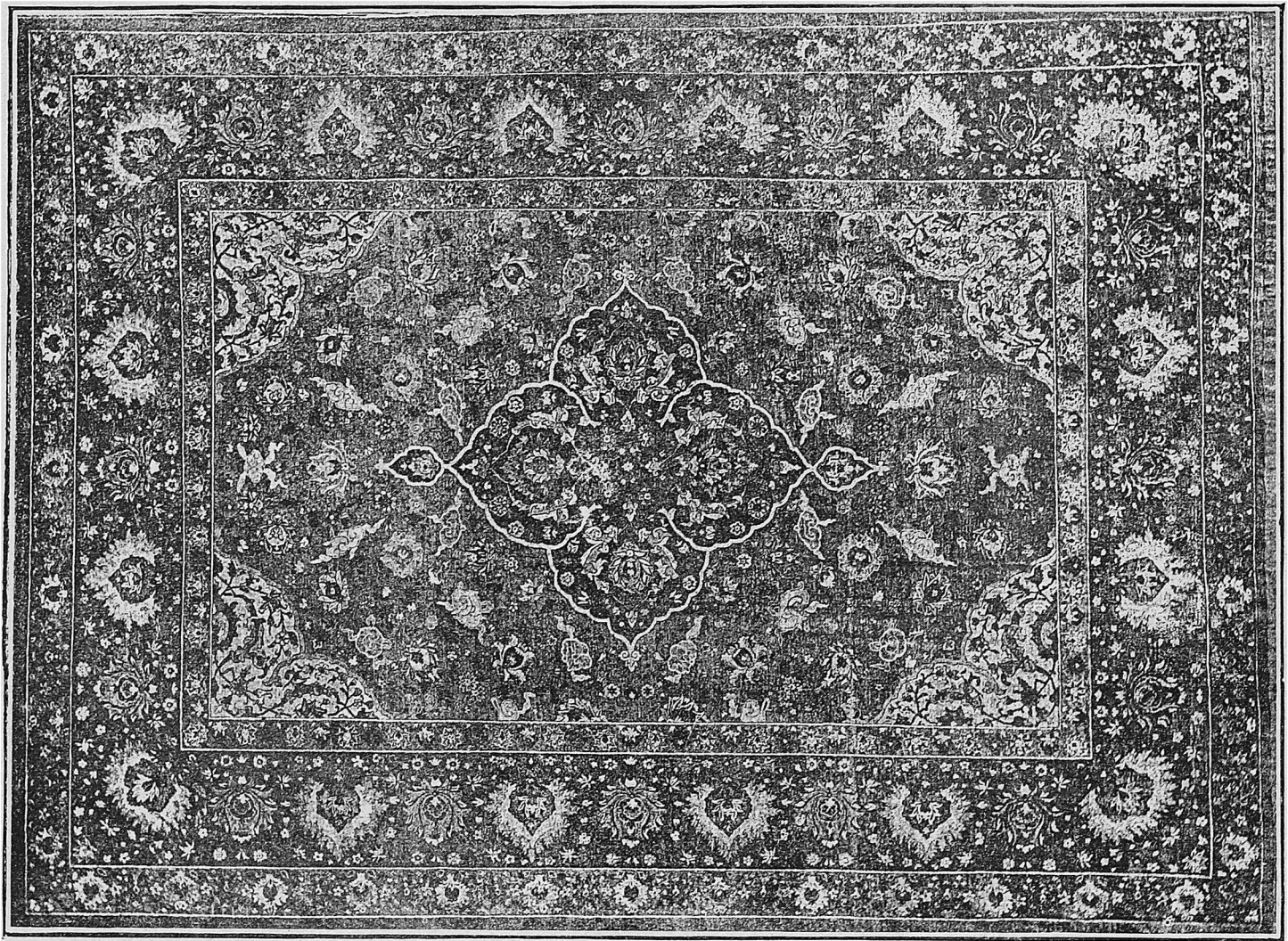
ENAMELS AND ENAMELING.

IT is gratifying to find this beautiful art of enameling coming into renewed favor. The examples produced afford another illustration that once let the prospect of a continuous demand spring up for an ornamental process, the requisite skill will be forthcoming. Enameling finds its especial place

times it was held in due esteem owing largely to the rare beauty of the workmanship in which enameling played an important part. In addition to articles of personal adornment, it provides one of the handsomest ornamentations to toilet boxes.

Gold is the bed required for enamels, as other metals, even silver, react on certain colors of the vitreous substances. In the case of transparent enamels, the hot layer of enamel causes a discoloration of the metal which shines through. If copper is used for the plate, it is first coated with gold leaf which is then burned in, so that gold remaining still the basis, certain vitreous mixtures are imposed at a white heat.

The most artistic mode of treating enamel is by painting. The enamel painter has to work with colors that are different metallic oxides, melted with some vitrescent mixtures and ground to extreme fineness, when they are worked up with oil of spike-nard to the proper consistence of oil colors. The colors on his palette do not correspond to those developed by the firing where the mixture for gold, for instance, appears as a dead black. To skill in portraying and choosing his colors he has to add much practical knowledge of the chemical operation of one metallic oxide on another, the fusibility of the several materials, and the utmost degree of heat at which they will retain not only the accuracy of the figures which he has given but the precise



REPRODUCTION OF A SILK "SAVONNERIE" TAPESTRY FORMERLY IN THE COLLECTION OF M. ALBERT GOUPIL, FROM MESSRS. HAMOT'S MANUFACTORY AT AUBUSSON.

in enhancing the beauty of articles of jewelry known as bijouterie, in which the precious metals are a prominent feature as distinguished from joaillerie, a term for which we have no equivalent and which designates that branch of jewelry in which those metals do not form an essential feature of design, being subordinated to keeping diamonds and stones in place, the mounting being at times all but invisible. The latter, whether aigrette or other form, must be closely approached to determine the form of design; that of bijouterie is apparent at some distance. The number of methods of supplemental adornment applicable to bijouterie exceed any other decorative art. Articles of bijouterie may be chased, engraved and cast, or display in delicate arabesques repoussé, or be set off by niello work, the last named process imprinting in two tones all fanciful designs on the *champ levé*; they may be studded with diamonds and precious stones, resembling all the colors of the palette, and be especially enriched with enamels that approach in beauty and lustre sapphires, rubies and other stones. Bijouterie is more subject than joaillerie to fancy or caprice in fashion. In former

shade of color which he intends to lay on. Painting in enamel requires a succession of firings, first of the ground which is to receive the design, and which itself requires two firings, and then of the different parts of the design itself. As the color of some vitrefied metallic oxides, such as that of gold, will stand a moderate heat, whilst others require higher and varying temperatures to be properly fixed, it forms a great part of the technical skill of the artist to supply the different colors in proper order, firing first those shades which are produced by the colors that will endure the highest, and finishing with those that demand the least heat. The outline of the design is first traced on the enamel ground and burned in; after which the parts are filled up gradually by repeated burnings to the last and finest touches of enamel.

